

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, 1876, with transcript

Letter from Miss Mabel G. Hubbard to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Main St., Hartford.
Sunday (1876?) My dear Alec:

I suppose my postal has before this relieved your anxiety about my journey, if indeed you ever were very anxious which I doubt. Josie met me at the depot, her first remark was much to my disgust "Well you have been growing." I returned the compliment by saying she was growing smaller, so we were quite. She hates her shortness as much as I do my height. My postal was a stupid affair, pray for my credit don't keep it out of the fire long, I was occupied in trying not to tell the postman private matters, and so said none of the nice public things I have thought of since, and you would have written.

This is a complete old-fashioned house inside and out, with immense roomy old chairs and sofa that would easily accommodate a whole family of small people. Mr. Barnard's library is crammed full of books with hardly a moving space, the room is divided into compartments formed of book shelves. You might investigate the formation of this library so if in future you should have a great many books and a small room you can copy this, I think you would like it as you can get so many books near by you. Mr. Barnard's desk is made into one of these book shelves. I like Mr. Barnard better than any one else here except Josie, he is so very kind and gentle and thoughtful. Have you ever noticed he has Whittier's forehead, high and arched at the top, a good head as you told me. Mr. Barnard is a protestant married to the daughter of French catholic refugees and all his children are catholic, the only ladies and gentleman of that religion in Hartford. I went 2 to church with Josie this afternoon, it is the first time since my return from Europe since I was in a catholic church, and the incense and candles reminded me so strongly of Paris and Rome. The regular rows of pews are however different, and the bare walls looked the barer for

Library of Congress

the few small miserable chromas. The Christmas greens too were few and poor, but the candles were so pretty. Only most of the ceremonies seemed so meaningless to me, they never felt so before, but today I could not see the use of holding either end of the Priest's vestment when he bowed etc. I like bowing when there is not too much of it and it is reverent, but most of the choristers were not reverent. But I was struck with the quiet earnest attentive behavior of the majority of the congregation. Abroad the worship is often so mechanical, here so reverent. They have Sunday schools too, I am rather surprised at the catholicism of my friends, it is so like protestantism, so little invocation of saints, and more simple adoration of God the Son and Holy Ghost. I am so glad we are of the same religion, I cannot understand how there can be perfect confidence and oneness between two people holding such different opinions on such deep and important matters. There must be always something about which they cannot speak. I cannot see how a husband and wife can go on like that loving each other so much. I think if you were catholic I should try to be one too, anything rather than such separation. Mr. Barnard is an advocate of education, public and enlightened and such as the catholics dislike, and if his wife agrees with him it will be against the wishes of her church — and I thought when I sat down I could not fill up this sheet, I have not only done so but have still more to say, but will wait until next time before exhausting my budget of news. I hope you are comfortably settled in your new quarters by this time. If you want it your photograph of Minerva is in the top drawer of my closet and if you tell Ber she will give it to you. You don't sit up very very late now do you. I shan't dare to leave you again if you come to me all worn out. I shall be so glad to see you, come just as soon as ever you can, but not before. You had best do all your business here before coming to me. You want to take the earliest train from Boston, but not until you have done all you have to do.

Josie desires to be remembered, and I send ever so much love to my Alec.

Lovingly, Mabel.